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## ABSTRACT

Just as superiors influence subordinates, subordinates may influence superiors. This study scrutinizes the relationship between the techniques of influence used by subordinates and the way in which the subordinates view their superiors' leadership styles. Questionnaires were sent to 250 randomly selected administrators of hospitality education programs (out of a possible 370) in two- and four-year higher education institutions in the United States. A total of 157 surveys were returned, of which 144 were usable, for an overall return rate of 57.6 percent. These subjects were chosen because they also function as department heads of a clearly defined sub-unit of a college or university. The supervisors influenced by the department heads included deans, directors, and chairpersons. The Methods of Upward Influence instrument assessed upward influence methods and their frequency of use; the Perceived Leadership Style instrument gathered data regarding the subjects' views of their supervisors' leadership styles. The results revealed that the main methods of upward influence used by the department heads were reason and coalition. Reason employs facts and rational arguments to substantiate requests; coalition obtains the support of other members of an organization, such as faculty members, to exert upward influence. Treatment of the survey data suggests that subordinates are less likely to use assertiveness and higher authority (influencing the supervisor by appealing to someone at a higher level) to influence supervisors who clarify roles in achieving goals and who consider their subordinates' welfare. Reason seems to be a preferable method when good relationships exist between the subordinates and their supervisors. Forty-three references and three tables are included. (RG)

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ADMINISTRATORS' METHODS OF UPWARD INFLUENCE AND  
PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR SUPERVISORS' LEADERSHIP STYLES

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## Introduction

### Background

The study of leadership has generated a vast literature on the exercise of influence by leaders. Organizational psychologists have shown particular interest in studying the ways subordinates can be influenced to improve productivity and morale. However, leadership and followership are activities of mutual influence and counterinfluence (Bass, 1981). Leaders and followers exchange benefits and their relationship is maintained by this social exchange and mutual influence (Hollander, 1978).

Just as leaders influence followers (downward influence); followers may assert influence and make demands on the leader (upward influence) and several researchers (Gabarro, 1979; Kanter, 1977; Pelz, 1952; Weinstein, 1979) have shown that the upward influence ability of subordinates may be a vital factor in determining organizational effectiveness.

Pelz (1952) reported a study where researchers were puzzled to discover that both highly satisfied and unsatisfied groups of workers had supervisors whose behavior was similar. Further research revealed that satisfied groups had supervisors who had a great deal of upward influence with their boss. The purpose of this study is to examine those factors that may potentially affect the choice of a method of influence that an administrator will use to influence his or her supervisor. Mowday (1978) found that, in four out of five decision situations examined, effectiveness of an influence attempt was significantly related to the choice of a method of influence. However, it is unclear

why a specific method is used by a subordinate (Schilit and Locke, 1982).

### Theoretical Framework

Classical writers on organizations such as Taylor (1911) and Weber (1947) viewed organizations from the rational perspective. The scientific management approach by Taylor (1947) and Weber's (1947) theory of bureaucracy focused on the goal specificity and formal structure of organizations. Their writings directed attention toward formally prescribed levels of authority and rational modes of behavior among participants in an organization. More recently, it has been recognized that relations among organizational members are governed by an informal power structure, in addition to the formal authority structure prescribed by the organization (Thompson, 1967). Although the informal power structure and the formal authority structure are related the two are seldom identical even in the most bureaucratic of organizations (Dalton, 1959; Thompson, 1959).

According to Bowers (1976), an organization is conceptualized as having a roughly pyramidal structure whose basic unit is the face-to-face work group: people who regularly interact (communicate, influence, motivate) in the workplace. Intra-organizational behavior is viewed not within the context of "rational" co-ordination, but rather within the natural system perspective, where more emphasis is placed on the behavioral structure of organizations. This perspective recognizes that competing sets of interests exist within organizations and this competition is likely to result in "political" behavior.

Accordingly, if we accept Bowers' (1976) notion of the pyramidal structure of organizations, where groups at different levels are linked together, then as Likert (1961) observes, it is essential that groups be linked not only downward but also upward in the organization, so that groups lower in the organizational pyramid may be in a position to interact with and influence higher levels of the organization. Organizational decisions may be seen as outcomes of bargaining processes in which various individuals or coalitions attempt to advance their own interests. However, it is unlikely that all individuals in an organization are equally powerful or equally skillful in exercising their power. The possession of power and the effectiveness with which it is exercised are likely to have an impact on eventual decision outcomes.

Upward influence may be viewed as "informal influence" because those who exert upward influence generally do not exercise formal authority over their targets of influence based on their position in the formal organizational hierarchy. Informal influence is central to the study of organizational politics which is recognized as an important area of study (Cobb, 1986).

The subjects in this study are department heads in higher educational institutions. These administrators are equivalent to middle managers in corporations. Uytterhoeven (1972) described the middle manager as a "playing coach" and this description is especially appropriate for the subjects of this study. Department chairpersons are players (as faculty members) and

coaches (as administrators). This investigation will provide valuable insight to the way these playing coaches manage their relationship with their supervisors.

According to Gabarro and Kotter (1980), successful administrators recognize that in order to be effective in their jobs they must establish and manage a relationship of mutual dependence with their supervisors. Part of this relationship involves the use of upward influence and this study will provide an understanding of certain personal and situational factors that affect the choice of upward influence methods.

#### The Use of Influence in Organizations

The exercise of influence has been referred to in various ways by different researchers who have studied the concept of power in organizations (Lindholm, 1968; Michener and Suchner, 1972; Tedeschi, Schlenker & Lindskold, 1972). Cartwright (1965) pulled together the literature on influence from various fields and apparently diverse topics such as persuasion, conformity, supervision, organizational decision-making, coalition formation, and the exercise of economic, political and military power. He provided the original conceptual outlines for a comprehensive theoretical framework on the nature of influence. Despite the different terminologies used by various writers the process being described remains the same.

David Kipnis' (1974) descriptive model of the power act will form the theoretical framework of this investigation. This model is based on the work of Cartwright (1965) and attempts to describe the chain of events that follow the decision of a person

to exercise influence. Cartwright identified three major facets of the influence process, namely (1) the influence agent (person exerting influence) (2) the method of exerting influence and (3) the target of influence (the person being influenced).

According to Kipnis (1974), people in organizations need to exert influence in order to fulfill the requirements of their roles in the organization. For example, administrators must be able to exert some influence to affect favorable decisions for their department. Once the decision has been made to exert influence, a person must then select a method of influence to use in order to achieve a successful outcome. Kipnis states that the various methods include forms of persuasion, threats, promises, rewards and force. This selection of a method may be moderated and affected by institutional norms, culture, values, costs and perceptions. This study examines the relationship between the methods of influence used by influence agents (i.e. departmental chairpersons) and the way these agents perceive their targets' (i.e. deans) leadership styles.

The Kipnis model was adapted to form a model of upward influence since the departmental chairperson is at a lower level in the formal organizational hierarchy than the dean. Schilit and Locke (1982) presented the various methods of upward influence that researchers had found. These included rational presentation, informal exchange, formal exchange, adherence to rules, upward appeal, manipulation, formation of coalitions and assertiveness.

## METHODOLOGY

### Description of the Population

The population for the study included administrators of hospitality education programs in two-year and four-year higher educational institutions in the United States. There are 275 two-year and 95 four-year hospitality education programs in the United States (American Hotel & Motel Association, 1986). These programs were randomly sampled and a questionnaire was sent to 250 administrators of these programs. This strategy provided a sample of educational administrators who perform similar administrative functions at the department chairperson level and who manage a clearly defined organizational sub-unit of a college or university.

### Description of the Sample

A total of 157 (62.8) surveys were returned, of which 144 (57.6%) were usable. Eighty two of the respondents were administrators of two year hospitality programs and 61 were administrators of four year hospitality programs. One administrator did not respond to this item. Hospitality programs were housed in various colleges and divisions in their respective institutions and 65 (45.1%) were part of the division or college of Business Administration. Twenty four (16.7%) programs were autonomous and 23 (16%) were part of Home Economics. Thirty two (22.2%) programs could not be grouped into any of the above categories and included such diverse titles as Human Ecology, Community Projects, Food and Natural Resources and



## Professional Studies.

The influence targets in the study were the supervisors of the responding program administrators. Many of the administrators (50.7%) reported to a Dean and another 32.6% reported to a Director or Chairperson. The data also indicated that a substantial majority (77.1%) of the respondents had been supervised by their present supervisor for five years or less. Many of the administrators (45.4%) had five years or less of experience in their administrative positions. Experience in the position varied from as little as one year to as much as 30 years.

Many of the programs (64.6%) had less than six full-time faculty; and many of them (70.8%) had less than six part-time faculty. The number of faculty, both full-time and part-time, was used to assess the size of a program. In order to compute size; full-time faculty were given a weight of one , and part-time faculty a weight of 0.5. Size was then computed by adding the two weighted numbers. This resulted in a mean of 9.74 faculty per program for the sample.

## Instrumentation

Methods of Upward Influence - An adapted version of the Kipnis-Schmidt Profiles of Organizational Influence Strategies (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1982) was used to measure the methods administrators use to influence their supervisors and how often these methods are used. This instrument was developed from two earlier studies reported by Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson (1980). In a later study, Kipnis and Schmidt (1984) reported

acceptable levels of reliability for each of the subscales of the instrument. The subscales represented the different methods of upward influence and they are defined below (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1982):

Friendliness - "attempting to influence your manager by causing him to think well of you" (p.9)

Bargaining - "attempting to influence your manager by means of negotiation and exchange of benefits or favors" (p.9)

Reason - "attempting to influence your manager by relying on data and information to support your requests" (p.10)

Assertiveness - "to influence your manager by means of a forceful manner" (p.10)

Higher Authority - an indirect means of influencing a supervisor by circumventing the chain of command and appealing to someone at a higher level to influence one's supervisor.

Coalition - "mobilizing other people in the organization to assist you in influencing your manager" (p.11)

Subjects were asked to indicate on a five point scale how frequently they used the listed tactics to influence their immediate supervisor during the past year. The scale has verbal anchors which range from "almost always use this tactic" (5) to "never use this tactic" (1).

Perceived Leadership Style - The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire - Form XII (LBDQ) was used to obtain data regarding hospitality program administrators' perceptions of their supervisors' leadership styles. The LBDQ was originally developed by Hemphill and Coons and later expanded as a result of

a cooperative effort of various other researchers (Stogdill & Coons, 1957). Form XII is a result of the fourth revision of the questionnaire and this survey included the following three subscales of the LBDQ:

1. Initiation of Structure - clearly defines own role and lets followers know what is expected.(10 items)

2. Consideration - regards the comfort, well-being, status and contributions of followers.(10 items)

3. Superior Orientation - maintains cordial relations with superiors; has influence with them.(10 items)

Respondents indicated their perception of their leaders' behavior by drawing a circle around one of five numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) following an item. A "5" indicated that the leader "Always" engages in the behavior described by the item, while a "1" indicated that the leader "Never" engages in the described behavior.

The initiation of structure and consideration subscales were selected for this study because they were the original factors of the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (Halpin & Winer, 1957) and many research studies have been conducted using this two-dimensional construct of leader behavior (Owens, 1981). A factor analytic study by Miller (1973) also indicated a two factor solution consisting of consideration and initiation of structure.

The superior orientation subscale was included because it is a measure of upward influence and thus is of vital concern in this study of upward influence methods. Pelz's (1952) study

showed that middle managers' upward influence with their supervisors has an effect on the job satisfaction of the middle managers' subordinates.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Means and Standard deviations were calculated for each of the Upward Influence methods. These are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

### Means and standard deviations of Upward Influence Methods

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Reason	4.24	0.53
Coalition	3.52	0.93
Friendliness	2.77	0.73
Assertiveness	2.20	0.65
Higher Authority	1.92	0.66
Bargaining	1.78	0.76

N=144

(Scale: 1 = Never, 5 = Almost Always)

The two primary methods of upward influence used were Reason and Coalition. Reason is an upward influence strategy whereby facts and logical arguments are used to support requests. Administrators who use Reason try to persuade their supervisors on the basis of the merits of the request and rely on data and information to support their requests (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1982). It is not too surprising to find that this is the most predominant upward influence strategy. After all, the department supervisor is at a lower level in the formal hierarchy of the organization and must use methods that will result in successful outcomes. Kipnis, Schmidt, Swaffin-Smith and Wilkinson

(1984) cited the use of Reason as the most frequently used method of upward influence in business organizations.

According to Wolotkiewicz (1980), a major role of the department chairperson is to prepare and defend their annual budgets. It seems clear, as Tucker (1981) contends, well documented budget requests presented in a logically organized format, provide supervisors with information that will be helpful in rational allocation of funds. Tucker also emphasised that frequent interactions with the dean were important, implying that upward influence must be exerted frequently. He stated:

Much is to be gained and nothing lost by frequent discussions with the dean concerning the resources needed and the problems faced by the department. Chairpersons tend to review developments only at annual budget meetings, but they should take the initiative to call the dean's attentions to problems as they occur. Conferences with the dean should be requested during the year, and matters to be discussed at these conferences should be well documented and should clearly indicate a continuous pursuit of department goals. (p. 253)

Coalition, on the other hand is a strategy of procuring the support of other members of an organization in order to exert upward influence. In this study, the coalitions that hospitality program administrators form are likely to consist of faculty from their department. Obtaining the support of faculty is a virtual necessity for department chairpersons to be successful. This necessity has arisen from the paradoxical "player-coach" role of the department chairperson. This administrator is a leader but rarely has undisputed authority. A department chairperson must ensure that issues that he or she advocates to the dean reflect those issues that have the support of the faculty. A strong coalition of the faculty can seriously undermine, or provide

valuable support to, a departmental chairperson and they develop close relationships because of their frequent interaction.

Tucker (1981) states:

No matter how large the department, no matter how deeply divided over pedagogical and philosophical issues it may be, it's members are bound together in many ways. (p. 4)

Canonical correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between different methods of upward influence used and administrators' perceptions of their supervisors' leadership styles. Canonical correlation analysis is a multivariate statistical model which facilitates the study of interrelationships among multiple independent and multiple dependent variables. In this study, the multiple dependent variables were the six methods of upward influence while the multiple independent variables were the three facets of leadership style, namely Initiation of Structure, Consideration and Superior Orientation.

The underlying logic of this analysis involves the derivation of a linear combination of variables from each of the two sets of variables so that correlation between the sets is maximized (Thompson, 1984). Wilks' lambda was calculated to test the significance of the canonical functions and the 0.05 level of significance was used to reject the null hypothesis. Structure correlation coefficients of all the variables were computed in order to interpret the canonical functions. Variate adequacy coefficients and were calculated to examine the adequacy of the canonical functions. Invariance analysis was conducted to cross-

validate the results. Table 2 presents the three canonical functions extracted as a result of the analysis along with their respective canonical correlation coefficients, squared canonical correlation coefficients, Wilks' Lambdas and significance levels.

Table 2

Canonical correlation analysis

Function	Canonical correlation coefficient	Squared Canonical correlation coefficient	Wilk's lambda	Significance
1	.4444	.1975	.7329	.001
2	.2880	.0830	.9133	.258
3	.0631	.0040	.9960	.969

Only the first canonical function was significant and has a canonical correlation of 0.44. Squared canonical correlation coefficients represent the amount of variance shared by the linear composites of the two variable sets in each function. Thus for the first function 19.75% of the variance is shared by the two linear composites.

Although canonical correlation analysis does yield standardized canonical function coefficients which are similar to beta weights in multiple regression, interpretation of these function coefficients does not have much practical value (Meredith, 1964). Instead, as suggested by Levine (1977), the nature of the canonical relationship was interpreted using

canonical structure coefficients. As stated by Hair et al

(1979):

Each canonical function consists of a pair of variates, one for each of the subsets of variables entered into the analysis. In other words, each canonical function has two variates, one representing the independent variables and the other the dependent variables. The canonical variates are interpreted based upon a set of correlation coefficients, usually referred to as canonical loadings or structure correlations. p.183

These structure correlation coefficients are similar to factor loadings in factor analysis and reflect the importance of the original variables in deriving the canonical variate. Table 3 presents the standardized canonical function coefficients, the structure correlation coefficients and the squared structured structure correlation coefficients for the first function.

Table 3

Standardized canonical coefficients, structure coefficients and squared structure coefficients for first function

Variable	Canonical coefficients	Structure coefficients	Squared Structure coefficients
Friendliness	.3339	.1102	.0121
Reason	.3590	.2252	.0507
Assertiveness	-.5730	-.5735	.3289
Bargaining	.3008	-.1351	.0182
Coalition	.2145	.1778	.0316
Higher Authority	-.7986	-.7223	.5217
Initiation of Structure	.6685	.8743	.7644
Consideration	.5715	.8824	.7786
Superior Orientation	-.2315	.3837	.1472

The dependent variables Higher Authority and Assertiveness show moderately high negative correlations (-.72 and -.57 respectively) and the independent variables Consideration and Initiation of Structure and show moderately high positive



correlations (.87 and .88 respectively) with their canonical variate. This may be interpreted as an inverse relationship between the use of the Assertiveness and Higher Authority methods of upward influence by an influence agent and his or her perception of a target's leadership style that is high in Initiation of Structure and in Consideration. As Thompson (1984) states:

A squared canonical structure coefficient represents the proportion of variance linearly shared by a variable with the variable's canonical composite. p.21

These coefficients indicate how useful each variable is in the analysis. In this study the variables with the largest squared structure correlation coefficients were Assertiveness, Higher Authority, Initiation of Structure and Consideration.

In order to clarify and explain this result, the variables will be first described. The descriptions of the variables provide support for the discussion that follows.

Initiation of Structure shows the extent to which "a leader initiated activity in the group, organized it, and defined the way work was to be done" (Bass, 1981, p. 359). It also includes such behavior as clarifying the leader's own role and those of the subordinates toward achieving the goals of the organization. Leaders who score high on this factor insist on maintaining standards, meeting deadlines and providing detailed procedures for carrying out tasks.

Consideration shows the extent to which "a leader exhibited concern for the welfare of the group" (Bass, 1981, p. 358). It includes such behavior as showing appreciation for good work,

treating subordinates as equals, and obtaining approval of subordinates before proceeding on important matters. Leaders who score high on this factor make special efforts to put subordinates at ease and are easy to approach.

Assertiveness is a method of upward influence where forceful demands, direct requests and expression of strong emotion (including anger) are used to influence a supervisor (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1982). This method involves the setting of deadlines and creating the impression that one will not accept "no" for an answer.

Higher Authority is a method of upward influence that circumvents the chain of command. Influence agents rely on help from someone in the higher levels of the organization to influence the target. It is an indirect method of influence and entails approaching someone in the organization who has formal power and authority over the supervisor (target).

The descriptions of the variables help to provide logical explanations to the finding that an influence agent who perceives the leadership style of a target as high in Consideration and Initiation of Structure is unlikely to use Higher Authority and Assertiveness to exert upward influence. Assertiveness may be appropriate when trying to influence a subordinate or even a peer; when the target of influence does not have formal power or authority over the influence agent. However, it will be risky to use this method when trying to influence a supervisor where the influence agent has less power than the target. Expressing strong emotion such as anger in order to get what one wants will probably lead to a tense relationship between influence agents

and their supervisors. Similarly, Higher Authority is a method that also may result in adversarial relations between a superior and a subordinate. Frequent circumventing of the chain of command will most certainly undermine the relationship between a department chairperson and a dean and may eventually result in complete alienation. In this case, the department chairperson may achieve nothing at all when he or she exerts upward influence.

It is logical that these two methods of upward influence will be used infrequently, especially by influence agents who perceive their supervisors as high in Consideration. Consideration connotes an open and consultative relationship and it may not be necessary to use the tactics that go with Assertiveness and Higher Authority to influence one's supervisor. A more direct method of upward influence, such as Reason, would seem more preferable when there are good working relationships between influence agents and their targets. These results support the findings of Cheng (1983) who divided upward influence methods into rational and political tactics. Political tactics included threats (similar to Assertiveness) and upward appeal (similar to Higher Authority) among others. His study found that influence agents, who perceived supervisors to exhibit characteristics similar to low Consideration and low Initiation of Structure, tended to use political upward influence methods such as threats.

The finding that subordinates are less likely to use Higher Authority and Assertiveness to influence a supervisor who

exhibits behavior high in Consideration and Initiation of Structure has some important implications. According to Owens (1981), research on these two concepts of leader behavior shows that those leaders who exhibit such behavior are viewed as effective leaders. House and Filley (1971) found that Consideration was significantly related to subordinate satisfaction with the job and with the company. Evans (1968) reported that both Consideration and Initiation of Structure were positively related to worker goal importance and job satisfaction. These studies suggest why a considerate, task oriented type of leadership style is less likely to evoke the use of Higher Authority and Assertiveness as methods to influence a supervisor.

The influence targets who were perceived to exhibit this leadership style in this study were deans and other supervisors of hospitality program administrators in higher educational institutions. The results show that if a dean could exhibit behavior that is high in Consideration and Initiation of Structure, then their subordinate department chairpersons would be less likely to circumvent or bypass the authority of the dean. In the same vein, department chairpersons also would be less likely to make forceful, emotional demands or issue ultimatums to a dean who exhibited behavior high in Consideration and Initiation of Structure.

Variate adequacy coefficients indicate how each canonical variate, on the average, represents the variance in the original unweighted variables in each set. Since each canonical function consists of a pair of variates (one each for the dependent and

independent variable sets), a total of two variate adequacy coefficients were calculated for the first and only significant function. The canonical variates for the first function represent 15.39% of the variance in the dependent variables and 56.34% of the variance in the independent variables.

### Conclusion

Every administrator is a member of two face-to-face work groups : the group for which he or she is responsible and the group to which he or she reports . This overlapping of groups is illustrated by Likert's (1961) "linking pin" concept in organizations. For example, department chairpersons in a university serve as "linking pins" between the higher administration of the university and the faculty in the department. This role requires them to facilitate communication, decision-making, and other influence processes between these levels. Most importantly, Likert(1961) points out:

The capacity to exert influence upward is essential if a supervisor (or manager) is to perform his supervisory functions successfully. To be effective in leading his own group, a supervisor must be able to influence his own boss, that is, he needs to be skilled both as supervisor and as a subordinate. (p. 114)

Such a perspective highlights upward influence as a critical variable of study by researchers interested in developing a more comprehensive understanding of behavior in organizations.

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